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**COSTA RICA'S EARTH UNIVERSITY AIMS TO "PLANT THE FUTURE"**

***Twenty Six Countries Around the World will Unite to Plant Trees Simultaneously***

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, June 2, 2010** – In commemoration of EARTH's twentieth Anniversary, EARTH University and its graduates, with the support of the Costa Rica Tourist Board (ICT), CNN and Cummins are organizing a simultaneous global tree planting on June 5, World Environment Day, called *EARTH Plants the Future*. Tree plantings have been organized by EARTH alumni in over 26 countries, and planting commitments exceed 650,000 trees as of today.

*EARTH Plants the Future* is both a symbolic and practical action to address climate change, as it represents both the hope for the future and a concrete act to mitigate current emissions of greenhouse gases. On the EARTH campus alone, there will be over 1500 participants planting 16,500 trees. All over Latin America, countries where our graduates are working have organized tree plantings, such as Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia and El Salvador.

"Initiatives such as these have propelled Costa Rica's goal to obtain environmental sustainability," said Carlos Ricardo Benavides, Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica. "We are excited to be supporting this important global initiative and we urge the international community to become advocates and unite in this endeavor on World Environment Day," added Benavides.

EARTH's office in the United States has also launched a campaign with donors, challenging them to use fundraising software to find friends and family to sponsor trees for the planting. The goal is for each participant to raise \$200, sponsoring 40 trees.

Those interested in getting involved with *EARTH Plants the Future* can participate remotely by purchasing trees on the website. Trees that will be planted at EARTH can be purchased for \$5,

or virtual trees can be planted for free. For every 20 trees planted virtually, a sponsor will donate one real tree.

### **Did you know?**

If every person on this planet were to plant just ONE tree, we would fix nearly 260 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually? That's enough to offset the annual carbon emissions of Colombia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama and Nicaragua COMBINED. Help us reach 1 million trees.

###

### **About Costa Rica**

Costa Rica is located in Central America, nestled between Nicaragua and Panama, and bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and the west by the Pacific Ocean. This small country represents only .01 % of the planet's surface and it shelters almost 4% of the existing world's biodiversity. It has given priority to the conservation of its natural resources, protecting 26% of its national territory through the creation of National Parks and other natural areas. The country also offers world-class eco-tourism and adventure travel. The options are unlimited for any discriminating traveler: horseback riding on a secluded beach; hiking through the lush whispering greenery of a rainforest; having an exhilarating experience on a white-water rafting trip, observing the tropical forests from a canopy tour; surfing the blue waves of either coast; experiencing a quite, close encounter with different species of birds and wildlife; and enjoying the diverse culture and hospitality of the Ticos.

### **About EARTH University**

EARTH, located in Guácimo, Limón, Costa Rica is a private, international, non-profit university dedicated to education in the agricultural sciences and natural resources in order to contribute to sustainable development in the tropics by seeking a balance between agricultural production and environmental preservation. Over the last 20 years, EARTH has been implementing a unique educational model that allows the University to offer opportunities to the most qualified young people, and through these young leaders, EARTH contributes to the sustainable development of Latin America and other tropical regions

### **About the Costa Rica Tourist Board**

The Costa Rica Tourist Board, created in 1955, is an autonomous institution of the State, responsible for regulating the tourism activity in Costa Rica and promoting Costa Rica's tourism attractions and destinations both at a national and international level. The Costa Rica Tourist Board creates tourism norms, regulations, incentives and grants the tourist declaratory for Costa Rica's hotels, travel agencies, rental cars and other tourism organization and service provider.

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## **COSTA RICA SERÁ LA SEDE DEL NUEVO PROGRAMA "SAVE MY PLANET" TELEVISADO EN LA NUEVA CADENA LIVE WELL HD DE ABC EN LOS EEUU**

*Expertos del turismo sostenible exploran Costa Rica en busca de prácticas sostenibles que se pueden implementar fácilmente en el resto del mundo*

**San José, Costa Rica - 8 de diciembre 2009** - El Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (ICT) anuncia que Costa Rica será el país anfitrión de *Save My Planet*, un programa de televisión en la cadena Live Well HD de ABC en los EEUU. La primera temporada del programa consiste en 13 episodios los cuales están filmados en Costa Rica. *Save My Planet* comenzará a transmitirse el 11 de enero de 2010 y estará enfocado en temas de sostenibilidad. A través de su anfitrión, Stephen Brooks, el programa se dispone a explorar las prácticas de sostenibilidad que han hecho a Costa Rica el líder en iniciativas ambientales.

"Estamos muy entusiasmados de compartir nuestros logros y nuestras mejores prácticas con los espectadores de estos programas de alta calidad como *Save My Planet*", dijo María Amalia Revelo, Sub-Gerente y Directora de Mercadeo del Instituto Costarricense de Turismo. "Hoy en día es imprescindible compartir las mejores prácticas y hacer estas iniciativas accesible a los demás para que podamos comenzar a desarrollar una plataforma mundial para los modelos de negocio sostenibles".

El anfitrión, Stephen Brooks, creció en Miami y escogió a Costa Rica como su hogar en 1995, cuando se trasladó a Punta Mona. No sólo es un apasionado de las filosofías de sostenibilidad, sino que también ha demostrado su visión a través de sus acciones. En 1997, Brooks fundó el Centro de Punta Mona para la Sostenibilidad y Educación, permitiéndole aquellos que visitan la oportunidad de aprender sobre el rol y el origen de la comida en nuestras vidas diarias.

"En esta época es necesario ser conscientes del ambiente natural, y para ser sostenible uno tiene que ir mas allá de las normas, como comprar a nivel local, escoger productos orgánicos y participar en programas de reciclaje", dijo Brooks. "Estas prácticas deberían de ser un estilo de vida el cual las personas lo creen y lo viven diariamente. Estos principios forman parte de la filosofía y la sociedad costarricense y es lo que su gente muestra a través de la preservación de su cultura y su ambiente".

En 2003, Brooks hizo realidad estas ideas cuando creó el "Conscious Goods Caravan", que consistía en varios autobuses que viajaron desde San Francisco, California a Costa Rica a través de la Carretera Panamericana. Mediante el uso de combustibles alternativos, él y su equipo promovieron prácticas sostenibles para millones a lo largo del curso en los Estados Unidos, México y América Central.

Como anfitrión de *Save My Planet*, Brooks destacará algunos de los esfuerzos más exitosos de Costa Rica, así como otros proyectos alrededor del mundo. Lo más importante es que los televidentes podrán ver algunas de las características más impresionantes de Costa Rica, como la Reserva Biológica Bosque Nuboso Monteverde. Esta reserva es uno de los santuarios de vida silvestre más destacados de la Tierra, el cual protege a más de 400 especies de aves y demuestra los efectos duraderos de la preservación en las comunidades locales, la tierra y las especies.

Durante la temporada del programa, los televidentes, por ejemplo, podrán ver los beneficios de la producción y uso de energía renovable durante una visita a la Represa Arenal de Costa Rica y al centro de operaciones en donde se produce la energía hidroeléctrica del país. Hasta la fecha, Costa Rica produce el 93 por ciento de su energía de recursos renovables incluyendo la energía hidroeléctrica, geotérmica y eólica.

La primera temporada de *Save My Planet* estará centrada en proyectos sostenibles en Costa Rica que han sido implementados por hoteles y operadores turísticos de la Certificación de la Sostenibilidad Turística (CST) del país. El programa de CST fue creado por el ICT para reducir el impacto de la industria turística sobre el ambiente, la población y la cultura de Costa Rica. Después de trece años y 131 hoteles y operadores turísticos certificados, el programa de CST es considerado como el modelo más estricto y efectivo de turismo sostenible en América Latina. Además, el modelo ha ganado múltiples reconocimientos de los líderes de la industria y organizaciones de todo el mundo.

*Save My Planet* fue desarrollado por AnswersMedia, una empresa de Chicago especializada en la emisión de televisión y producción interactiva. "Costa Rica fue elegida como país anfitrión para el lanzamiento de la serie *Save My Planet* por su exitosa implementación de proyectos sostenibles en todo el país," dijo Matthew Palm, Productor Ejecutivo de AnswersMedia. "La impresionante belleza natural sumada a su historia de conservación de su cultura y ambiente hacen que este país sea el lugar perfecto para filmar escenas espectaculares que ilustran su gran esfuerzo y dedicación a la sostenibilidad", añadió Palm.

Costa Rica demostró por primera vez esfuerzos concretos de medidas de protección del medio ambiente en 1977 cuando declararon el 25 por ciento del territorio del país como áreas protegidas, una medida que ningún país había tomado por hasta ese momento. Hoy en día, esta zona ha aumentado a 26 por ciento e incluye 29 parques |

nacionales, variadas zonas de vida salvaje, reservas naturales y zonas de conservación marina.

Más importante aún, el país ha sido capaz de construir con éxito su industria turística, manteniendo su posición como uno de los más bio-diversos lugares en la Tierra. Programas como la Certificación para la Sostenibilidad Turística (CST), aseguran que el desarrollo moderno del país no borra la herencia rica de su pasado mientras que ofrece a los visitantes la oportunidad de experimentar algunos de los mayores tesoros del mundo.

Todos estos esfuerzos han resultado en un gran reconocimiento para el país y sus grandes logros en los niveles ambientales y sociales. Entre ellos se encuentra el Environmental Performance Indicator desarrollado por las Universidades de Yale y Columbia, que sitúa a Costa Rica como el país más limpio en las Américas. Además, por primera vez, La Consejería para la Defensa de Recursos Naturales (NRDC) honró al país entero con el reconocimiento de Biogema del Mundo por su compromiso de proteger más de 500.000 especies de flora y fauna.

Esto, junto con la cultura de Costa Rica, historia y filosofía de la conservación de los recursos naturales y su patrimonio, dan una explicación perfecta de por qué este país es el escenario ideal para un programa que muestre los principios ambientales y la conciencia social.

*Save My Planet* será transmitido en San Francisco, Chicago, Fresno, Los Ángeles, Houston, New York, Philadelphia, Toledo, Flint and Raleigh. Revise su programación local para detalles, o visite [www.livewellhd.com](http://www.livewellhd.com) para ver el programa vía internet.

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**COSTA RICA LAUNCHES SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND TWEETS UP ITS GAME**

*Increasing demand for the Costa Rica experience becomes a social affair*

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, August 2, 2010** – The Costa Rica Tourist Board has announced that it will soon be launching its official Visit Costa Rica Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels, aimed at catering to the increasing demand for information about this small and peaceful Central American country. The launch, tentatively scheduled for August 2010, will bring the experience a little closer to home for the more than one million visitors the country receives every year from North America and to those who are simply interested in learning more about the country and its tourism offerings.

With over 145 million Facebook users in the United States and Canada alone, the initiation of social media for Costa Rica is an essential tool for showcasing the elements that have made the destination increasingly popular. Therefore, the sites will provide information and feature images and video which captivate the essence of the country. Whether it is to plan their vacation or to share their own travel stories in Costa Rica, users will be able to participate in an engaging and interactive platform that will allow both travel professionals and consumers to learn more about the destination.

"Our research indicates that consumers are increasingly using social media to communicate with other travelers and to stay atop of latest information. People are hungry for knowledge on Costa Rica travel

and want up-to-date information that is readily available whenever they are planning a trip to the country," said Maria Amalia Revelo, Marketing Director, Costa Rica Tourist Board. "We think that given the country's broad and diverse offering, there is no better way to illustrate the Costa Rica experience than by sharing it one-on-one with users," she added.

The site will allow users will be to tap into feature content and the most current news on Costa Rica travel and activities. Additionally, users will have the opportunity to participate in future promotional activities (such as hot deals and social media- specific promotions), and the exchange of ideas between travelers, prospective travelers and the travel industry. Twitter users will also be able to participate.

Costa Rica has long been a favorite destination for adventure and nature lovers alike. Aside from its spectacular scenic views, Costa Rica has become a haven for weddings, honeymoons, family vacations and girl's getaways. The country has increasingly risen to the top of every travel enthusiast's must-see list.

Users of Visit Costa Rica's social platforms will be able to virtually experience a bit of Costa Rica's 28 environmentally protected national parks, which include tens of thousands of acres of rain and cloud forests, active volcanoes, beaches and waterfalls, allowing visitors to get a sneak-peek into its most exquisite offerings.

An added appeal for Costa Rica and its position as a Central American tourist destination has been its commitment to giving back to the planet and to its people. Due to these efforts, the country has become an ecological haven which is hosted by warm people who are proud and eager to show visitors their wonderful land. Their pride is translated into the vast amount of knowledge that they individually possess, turning any vacation to the country into an educational experience, in addition to being adventurous and relaxing. This attention to detail is what keeps visitors coming back to enjoy its natural wonders.

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#### **About Costa Rica**

Costa Rica is located in Central America, nestled between Nicaragua and Panama, and bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and the west by the Pacific Ocean. This small country represents only .03 percent of the planet's surface and it shelters almost 5 percent of the existing world's biodiversity. It

has given priority to the conservation of its natural resources, protecting 26 percent of its national territory through the creation of National Parks and other natural areas. The country also offers world-class eco-tourism and adventure travel. The options are unlimited for any discriminating traveler: horseback riding on a secluded beach; hiking through the lush whispering greenery of a rainforest; having an exhilarating experience on a white-water rafting trip, observing the tropical forests from a canopy tour; surfing the blue waves of either coast; experiencing a quite, close encounter with different species of birds and wildlife; and enjoying the diverse culture and hospitality of the Ticos.

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By visiting [www.facebook.com/visitcostarica](http://www.facebook.com/visitcostarica), users will be able to tap into feature content and the most current news on Costa Rica travel and activities. Additionally, users will have the opportunity to participate in future promotional activities (such as hot deals and social media-specific promotions), and the exchange of ideas between travelers, prospective travelers and the travel industry. Twitter users can also participate by following at [www.twitter.com/visitcrnews](http://www.twitter.com/visitcrnews).

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**Costa Rica to highlight its broad variety of tourism offerings during its 2010 EXPOTUR event**

***Exhibitors will showcase their products according to their tourism offerings including rural, well-being, and conventions, among others***

**SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, April 19, 2010 - EXPOTUR 2010**, Costa Rica Travel Mart and Central America's prominent travel trade show will take place May 16 to May 23 in the Convention Center Ramada Plaza Herradura Hotel in San Antonio de Belen, Costa Rica. This year's expo will place a strong emphasis on the different tourism products that the country offers including rural, volunteer, adventure, luxury, family, well-being and honeymoon, among others.

EXPOTUR 2010 will also have "islands" of exhibitors that will be represented by the different regions and products of the country to make it easier for participants to find their preferred destination and activities in Costa Rica. Tourism representatives from Turrialba, Manuel Antonio and the Caribbean coast will be on-hand to host their own "islands" and help visitors learn more about their regions.

The introduction of "islands" to the event was set up with the intention of highlighting and strengthening those market segments that have been key to Costa Rica's success as a destination while giving exposure to other developing or innovative areas of the industry. By segmenting the show in this way, participants will be able to obtain the products and services of each region in an easier and more specialized manner.



Participants will also be able to attend a variety of seminars which will cover a wide gamut of topics pertaining to the Costa Rica tourism product. Some of these include seminars about rural tourism, conventions and bureaus, medical tourism, baby-boomer travel and educational tourism. Seminars will be held on May 18 and 19. For more information on these and other educational seminars, please visit: [The EXPOTUR Site](#)

The Costa Rican Association of Professionals in Tourism (ACOPROT), the event organizer, in alliance with the National Fund of Forest Financing (FONAFIFO) is also implementing measures to mitigate carbon emissions generated at EXPOTUR. In order to compensate the carbon emissions, the organizations have pledged to a series of tree-planting events to preserve the rainforests of the country. This is the second year EXPOTUR has offered a carbon neutral event.

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**Costa Rica celebrates the new decade with an increase in tourist arrivals during  
the first two months of the year**

***2010 brings much optimism to the Costa Rica tourism industry***

**March 18, 2010, SAN JOSE, Costa Rica** – The Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT) has announced that tourist arrivals to Costa Rica, both by air and land, grew in January and February when compared to the same period in 2009. Official data shows an increase of 4.3 percent in January and 16.5 percent in February, signaling a welcomed turn around for its industry. In the first two months of the year, the country received 428,233 visitors, almost ten percent more tourist arrivals in comparison to the same time period in 2009.

"These figures are similar to those recorded in early 2008 when tourism in the country had not yet been hit by the international economic crisis," said Allan Flores, the country's Minister of Tourism. "Although there are still regions and businesses affected by the drop in numbers recorded in 2009, these numbers promise that we are on a good road to recovery," he said.

The growth in arrivals this year is more evident in the increase of aerial transportation. The Juan Santamaria International Airport, one of two of the country's international airports, welcomed 227,026 visitors, a nine percent increase from 2009. Additionally, an increase of 24 percent was seen at the Daniel Oduber International Airport in Liberia in comparison to the same time period.

Costa Rica's proximity to major hubs in the United States and the multitude of flight options makes it easy for travelers to vacation there. It is a two and half hour flight from Miami, a five-hour flight from New York, a four-hour flight from Dallas and a six-hour flight from Los Angeles.

Additionally, Costa Rica's 32 environmentally protected national parks, which include tens of thousands of acres of rain and cloud forests, active volcanoes, beaches and waterfalls, allow visitors to experience nature in its most pristine state through activities like hiking, rafting, canyoning, canopy tours, rock climbing and surfing. With all of these offerings, it is no wonder that everyone from families to couples even school groups yearn to visit the country.

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**SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, April 19, 2010 - EXPOTUR 2010**, Costa Rica Travel Mart and Central America's prominent travel trade show will take place May 16 to May 23 in the Convention Center Ramada Plaza Herradura Hotel in San Antonio de Belen, Costa Rica. This year's expo will place a strong emphasis on the different tourism products that the country offers including rural, volunteer, adventure, luxury, family, well-being and honeymoon, among others.

EXPOTUR 2010 will also have "islands" of exhibitors that will be represented by the different regions and products of the country to make it easier for participants to find their preferred destination and activities in Costa Rica. Tourism representatives from Turrialba, Manuel Antonio and the Caribbean coast will be on-hand to host their own "islands" and help visitors learn more about their regions.

The introduction of "islands" to the event was set up with the intention of highlighting and strengthening those market segments that have been key to Costa Rica's success as a destination while giving exposure to other developing or innovative areas of the industry. By segmenting the show in this way, participants will be able to obtain the products and services of each region in an easier and more specialized manner.

Participants will also be able to attend a variety of seminars which will cover a wide gamut of topics pertaining to the Costa Rica tourism product. Some of these include seminars about rural tourism, conventions and bureaus, medical tourism, baby-boomer travel and educational tourism. Seminars will be held on May 18 and 19. For more information on these and other educational seminars, please visit: [The EXPOTUR Site](#)

The Costa Rican Association of Professionals in Tourism (ACOPROT), the event organizer, in alliance with the National Fund of Forest Financing (FONAFIFO) is also implementing measures to mitigate carbon emissions generated at EXPOTUR. In order to compensate the carbon emissions, the organizations have pledged to a series of tree-planting events to preserve the rainforests of the country. This is the second year EXPOTUR has offered a carbon neutral event.

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**Costa Rica travel industry launches travel deals for the fall**  
***Travel packages perfect for any type of traveler***

**SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, August 30, 2010 –** Costa Rica, the jewel of Central America and global leader of sustainable tourism, has put together a broad variety of vacation packages and discounts to help travelers beat the upcoming winter blues. Travel deals are available beginning Labor Day weekend with most packages running through the end of the November.

Whether someone is looking to be adventurous, relax with the family, explore nature, take in a second honeymoon with someone special, or all of the above, Costa Rica has a special offer in hand. There are over 25 special travel promotions running throughout the country which range from additional free nights to awesome 10 day tours around the country that are a steal. These travel promotions will only be valid for a limited time, so travelers shouldn't miss out on the chance to book today.

Vacation packages and promotions ([LINK HERE](#)) will be running across the country and in all of your favorite Costa Rica destinations, including:

**Alajuela** – This province is most well-known for its volcano tourism and hot springs, particularly the Arenal Volcano, the third most active in the world. Travel deals to this region include stay two nights and get one free; free volcano tours and up to 50% your lodging. Many of them also include free breakfast with your stay.

**Cartago/Heredia** – This region speaks to coffee lovers and adventure travelers alike. Visitors can take advantage of these travel promotions and get a free tour of an organic coffee farm in Heredia or visit the near-by Pacuare River in Cartago for some white-water rafting.

**Guanacaste** – Traditionally one of the more popular destinations in Costa Rica, Guanacaste is famous for its amazing beaches and its tropical dry climate. Travel discounts and deals to this region include great room and tour rates that range from 15-35% off. You can get a great deal on spa services as well.

**Puntarenas** – Whether you want surf or just observe some of nature's greatest offerings, Puntarenas has something for you. Travel offers extend from the Mid to South Pacific and start



at just \$49 a night per person. For that extra special travel experience, throw in a whale watching tour.

**San Jose** – Tour operators are offering some great cross country tour packages for those that don't want to miss out on a single thing that Costa Rica has to offer. Travel deals start as low as \$610 for a four-day, three-night package for two people. For those who prefer to explore on their own, car rental/lodging packages are also available. Travelers should make sure to visit some of San Jose's many cultural offering while they are there.

To view a complete listing of these hotels and operators, please click [here](#):

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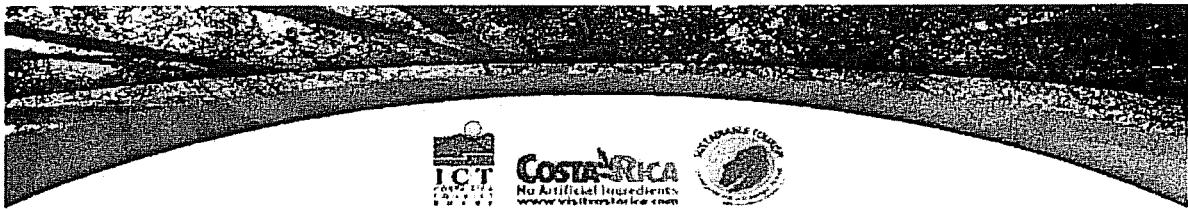
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**Costa Rica is honored with the TripAdvisor Traveler's Choice Awards 2010**  
***The country is the top choice beach and spa destination for travelers in Central and South America***

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, May 6, 2010 – Costa Rica** became the hands down winner in the **TripAdvisor 2010 Traveler's Choice Awards** in the beach and spa destinations category in Central and South America. The country nabbed the top spot in both categories and made up almost half of the reader's choices when it came to sun, sand and relaxation. The TripAdvisor Traveler's Choice Awards are based on the millions of reviews and opinions from travelers around the world.

Santa Teresa beach on Costa Rica's Pacific coast came in first place with readers, not only for its crystal-clear waters, but also for its surfing, fishing, snorkeling, kite-surfing and great yoga services. Other beaches in Costa Rica to be recognized by TripAdvisor.com users include the sun and sand of Manuel Antonio National Park; the funky vibe of Puerto Viejo on the Caribbean coast; and the white sand beaches of Playa Samara on the Pacific Northwest.

Readers chose the Arenal Volcano as their top destination for spa and relaxation in Central or South America. Famous for its hot springs, which derive from its even more famous active volcano, Arenal provides visitors with incredible access to wildlife as well as adventure activities like white-water rafting, windsurfing or horseback riding. Other Costa Rica hot spots for indulging yourself included the number one beach, Santa Teresa; the biodiversity of Manuel Antonio National Park and the shell-filled sands of Playa Conchal. Moreover, the Arenal Volcano placed tenth in the entire world for relaxation and spa activities.



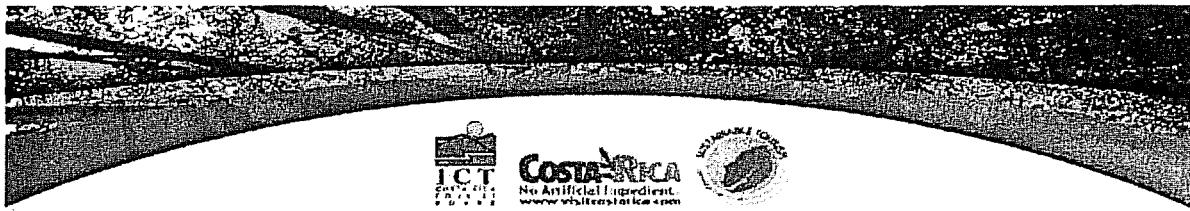
Costa Rica's biodiverse nature has long made it an attraction for travelers. Its 28 environmentally protected national parks, which include tens of thousands of acres of rain and cloud forests, active volcanoes, beaches and waterfalls, allow visitors to experience nature in its most pristine state through activities like hiking, rafting, canyoning, canopy tours and rock climbing. If scuba diving or surfing is what the traveler seeks, Costa Rica offers over a thousand miles of coastline on the Caribbean and Pacific coast that are ideal for any marine lover. As a result, Costa Rica has become the ideal destination for all types of travelers ranging from families to couples and thrill seekers alike.

#### **About Costa Rica**

Costa Rica is located in Central America, nestled between Nicaragua and Panama, and bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and the west by the Pacific Ocean. This small country represents only .05 percent of the planet's surface yet its land shelters 5 percent of the world's biodiversity and its waters are home to 4 percent of the planet's marine life. It has given priority to the conservation of its natural resources, protecting 26 percent of its national territory through the creation of National Parks and other natural areas. The country also offers world-class eco-tourism and adventure travel. The options are unlimited for any discriminating traveler: horseback riding on a secluded beach; hiking through the lush whispering greenery of a rainforest; having an exhilarating experience on a white-water rafting trip, observing the tropical forests from a canopy tour; surfing the blue waves of either coast; experiencing a quiet, close encounter with different species of birds and wildlife; and enjoying the diverse culture and hospitality of the Ticos.

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## **COSTA RICA'S TOURISM SECTOR ON THE RISE IN 2010**

***Country starts off 2010 with a positive upswing in international arrivals for the first quarter of the year***

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, April 22, 2010** – While 2009 was a difficult year for the tourism industry, it seems like things are looking up in Costa Rica. The country has reported an 11 percent rise in international tourism arrivals for the first quarter of the year, in comparison to the same period in 2009. The first three months of 2010 welcomed 636,434 international visitors by air, land and sea, providing encouraging news to those in the industry.

There was particularly good news from North American travelers, Costa Rica's most important market, as arrivals from this region increased almost 17 percent in the first quarter of 2010 compared to the same period of 2009. Many are expecting that the boost in travel from North America could be a sign that the worst of the crisis is over and that travelers are ready to get back out there and experience the world.

For Costa Rica Tourism Minister, Allan Flores, these numbers indicate a positive trend for the current high season already taking place, but as the low season approaches, the Costa Rica Tourist Board is taking measures to promote national tourism to different regions of the country to maintain the high numbers.

"These are strong signs of recovery for the tourism sector," said Minister of Tourism, Allan Flores. "We are approaching the levels of early 2008 arrival figures in the months prior to the onset of the global economic crisis; but we're cautious as the low season starts soon," he said.

In the case of the main international airport Juan Santamaría (SJO), the numbers indicate an estimated increase of almost 10 percent, representing approximately 352,962 tourists, while the Daniel Oduber airport (LIR), located in Liberia, Guanacaste,



experienced an increase of 27.4 percent, with 79,482 visitors. This data is gathered and analyzed by the ICT based on information from the Director Migration and Foreign Arrivals.

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**Costa Rica offers an opportunity for those traveling to Europe  
to reroute their travel plans**

*The industry opens its doors and offers great specials to those affected by the recent travel crisis*

**SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, May 17, 2010** – In response to the latest airline crisis caused by the volcano eruption in Iceland, Costa Rica's travel industry is offering travelers a variety of enticing promotional travel packages that will allow them to spend their hard earned vacation days in an exciting destination. Costa Rica's proximity to North America, convenient flight connections, and diversity of tourism products, will surely please any traveler seeking an alternative vacation spot that delivers a memorable experience.

This small nation, almost the size of West Virginia, is known as much for its leadership in sustainable tourism as it is for its incredible offering of activities and experiences for all types of travelers. Whether someone is looking to be adventurous, relax with the family, explore nature, take in a second honeymoon with someone special, or all of the above, Costa Rica has a special offer in hand. There are over 75 special travel promotions running in the country ranging from additional free nights, great upgrades, up to 50 per cent discount on spa treatments and much more. For a complete list of the hotel properties, tour operators and car rental companies that are offering special vacation deals, visit ([HYPERLINK HERE](#)). Travelers wanting to take advantage of these promotions should mention VPROMO when requesting the special rates.

Spa and well-being vacations are becoming the industry's newest travel trend and Costa Rica has been recognized by TripAdvisor users as one of the best places in Central and South America to enjoy spa getaways. Costa Rica gives travelers a variety of ways to rejuvenate and cleanse including the hot springs near the Arenal Volcano, the tranquil, yoga-infused beaches of the Nicoya Peninsula or the nature-filled setting of its Central Valley.

Another major attraction of Costa Rica is its beaches. The country boasts over 1000 miles of coast line which vary between three types of climates. For surfing enthusiasts, the choices are endless as well due to the 250 breaking points that can be found on its Pacific and Caribbean coasts. Of course, it caters to those who just wish to take in some sun and relax as well.

For the type of traveler who loves to pump their adrenaline, Costa Rica offers some of the top rated rivers in the world for white-water rafting as well as activities like hiking, wind surfing, kite surfing, horseback riding and much more. Of course, no Costa Rica vacation is complete without an exhilarating zipline tour through the canopies of the forest.

An added appeal for Costa Rica and its position as a Central American tourist destination has been its commitment to giving back to the planet and to its people. Due to these efforts, the country has become an ecological haven which is hosted by warm people who are proud and eager to show visitors their wonderful land. Their pride is translated into the vast amount of knowledge that they individually possess, turning any vacation to the country into an educational experience, in addition to being adventurous and relaxing. This attention to detail is what keeps visitors coming back to enjoy its natural wonders.

### **A Vacation that Gives Back**

Travelers can enjoy these great promotions ([HYPERLINK](#)) and give back while on vacation. When it comes to sustainable tourism offerings, few can compare to Costa Rica. The Costa Rica Tourist Board has implemented a program called Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) designed to promote the implementation of sustainable practices throughout the entire tourism sector, including hotels, tour operators, transportation providers, and best of all, the community. A large portion of the industry participates to some degree and some of the services they offer include recycling, solar heated water, reforestation initiatives and creating jobs for the people in the surrounding area, among others..

The CST program gives a zero through five “leaf” rating to those operations that meet strict guidelines for sustainable practices—the higher the score, the most green, efficient and sustainable the operation is. The CST program has become one of the most widely respected sustainable certificate programs and it has been adopted by the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization as a model, and many countries around the world are employing similar standards. When visiting Costa Rica, travelers can select from the 153 tourist companies that have been certified since the creation of the program. For more information, visit <http://www.turismo-sostenible.co.cr/EN/home.shtml>

Sustainability and conservation in the country also extends out into the community through its Blue Flag Ecology (BAE) program. Communities in Costa Rica are given the BAE certification through an evaluation of the quality of the ocean water, quality of drinking water, waste disposal and availability of sanitary facilities. This distinction is given to those communities who safeguard the environment and maintain necessary sanitary conditions of the water and the areas around it.

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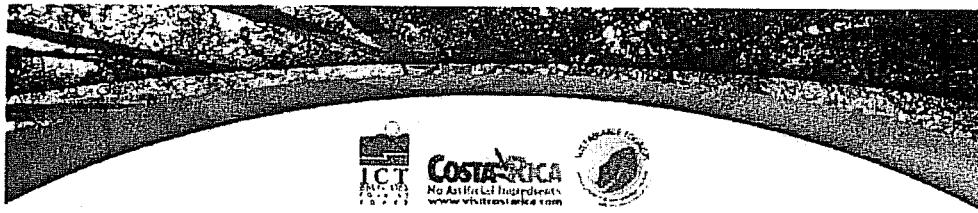
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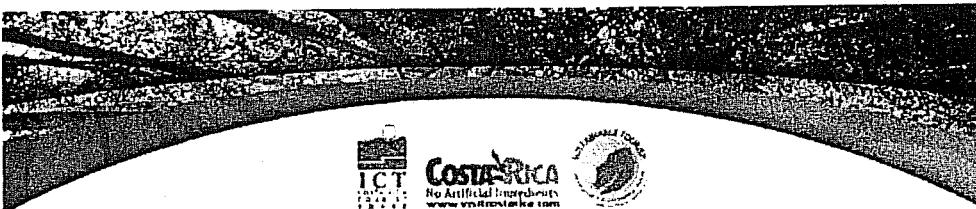
**Costa Rica Leads Global Partnership to Make Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Mandatory**  
*The country joins forces with United Nations and other organizations to promote sustainable tourism at a global level*

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, May 12, 2010** – Costa Rica, in a joint effort with France, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and other U.N. agencies have announced today the creation of the U.N. Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism. This organization has been formed to help governments and businesses make all tourism, everywhere, become more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

The new partnership, which will be led by Costa Rica and France, is designed to identify and disseminate successful initiatives from anywhere in the world and make them available elsewhere. It will also apply policy recommendations and lessons learned in integrating sustainability in tourism and develop new tools and projects where no existing solution has been found. Given its expansive network of government entities, industry associations, environmental and social organizations and U.N agencies, it is expected to have worldwide outreach. Additionally, the support and participation of financial institutions will enable the replication of good practices throughout.

Since 2008, Costa Rica, led by its Minister of Tourism, Carlos Ricardo Benavides, has chaired the Executive Council for the UNWTO and has formed part of its World Committee on Tourism Ethics, as well as its Sustainable Development Committee.

"The Partnership will be an up-to-date, dynamic forum where countries that are interested in tourism that is truly sustainable will be able to learn from the successful efforts of the other members and obtain technical assistance, and which will promote constant dialogue, the exchange of experiences, and seeking solutions to the problems that are common to the tourism sector," says Carlos Ricardo Benavides, Costa Rica's Minister of Tourism.



According to UNEP spokesman, Arab Hoballah, "The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism aims to transform the way tourism is done worldwide by seeking out and replicating *successful* ideas and projects from around the world to help tourism conserve nature and culture, produce wealth for local communities, countries, employees, and owners, while reducing its negative impacts. Poorly managed tourism can destroy the very natural and cultural attractions that tourists come to see, and lead to water shortages, impoverishment of local communities, social ills, and, eventually, to the decline of the destination and business failure."

While Costa Rica has long been known for the biodiversity of its land, its position as a leader in sustainable tourism began with the creation of its Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) program in 1995, which today is regarded by the UNWTO as the model for sustainable tourism in Latin America. The CST gives properties and operators an outline for developing their tourism business in a sustainable fashion which benefits not only the environment, but also the communities which surround it. Today there are 154 properties and operators which are certified, with many more waiting to receive their accreditation.

Through programs like the CST and the country's Blue Ecological Flag program, which brings citizens together to maintain the water quality of its beaches and its communities, the Costa Rica tourism industry has set the standard by proving that sustainable tourism is not only beneficial to the environment and to the people, but that it is a financially viable business model and debunking the myth that sustainability must be synonymous with poverty or lack of comforts when traveling.

Costa Rica's leadership and innovation in this arena has grown even stronger in the past few years. In 2007 the country announced its *Peace With Nature* campaign, which calls for all countries in the world to enhance actions and political commitments to revert, through a joint effort, the environmental degradation tendencies caused by human actions in the planet's ecosystems. The campaign includes a variety of programs to address environmental issues such as territory planning and management; a coastal marine program; a program to help curve climate change and education and communication about the importance of sustainability and sustainability efforts.

Additionally, the same year the country launched its national reforestation program which challenged companies and individuals to plant one million trees that would help reforest the country. Its citizens surpassed the goal overwhelmingly with three million trees and in 2008, when it strived to match the accomplishments of the previous year, Costa Rica became the country with the highest reforestation in the world planting over seven million trees.



All of these and other efforts from the public and private sector alike have helped to garner Costa Rica an unprecedented amount of recognition for its commitment including Cleanest Country in the Americas in 2009 and 2010 as determined by the Environmental Performance Index developed by the prestigious Yale and Columbia Universities. The study also ranked it third and fourth in the entire world, respectively. Additionally, the National Resources Defense Council named Costa Rica as a Biogem, the first whole country to receive the honor.

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**COSTA RICA LAUNCHES SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND TWEETS UP ITS GAME**

*Increasing demand for the Costa Rica experience becomes a social affair*

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, August 9, 2010** – The Costa Rica Tourism Board has announced the launch of its official Visit Costa Rica Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels, aimed at catering to the increasing demand for information about this small and peaceful Central American country. Through its new social media platforms, Costa Rica hopes to bring the experience a little closer to home for the more than one million visitors the country receives every year from North America and to those who are simply interested in learning more about the country and its tourism offerings.

With over 145 million Facebook users in the United States and Canada alone, the initiation of social media for Costa Rica is an essential tool for showcasing the elements that have made the destination increasingly popular. Therefore, the sites will provide information and feature images and video which captivate the essence of the country. Whether it is to plan their vacation or to share their own travel stories in Costa Rica, users will be able to participate in an engaging and interactive platform that will allow both travel professionals and consumers to learn more about the destination.

"Social media has become a tool that consumers are increasingly using to communicate with other travelers and to stay atop of latest information. People are hungry for knowledge on Costa Rica travel

and want up-to-date information that is readily available whenever they are planning a trip to the country," said Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica, Carlos Ricardo Benavides. "We think that given the country's broad and diverse offering, there is no better way to illustrate the Costa Rica experience than by sharing it one-on-one with users," Benavides added.

By visiting [www.facebook.com/visitcostarica](http://www.facebook.com/visitcostarica), users will be able to tap into feature content and the most current news on Costa Rica travel and activities. Additionally, users will have the opportunity to participate in future promotional activities (such as hot deals and social media- specific promotions), and the exchange of ideas between travelers, prospective travelers and the travel industry. Twitter users can also participate by following at [www.twitter.com/visitcrnews](http://www.twitter.com/visitcrnews). Additionally, users can also visit <http://www.youtube.com/VisitCostaRicaVideos> on YouTube.

Costa Rica has long been a favorite destination for adventure and nature lovers alike. Aside from its spectacular scenic views, Costa Rica has become a haven for weddings, honeymoons, family vacations and girl's getaways. The country has increasingly risen to the top of every travel enthusiast's must-see list.

Users of Visit Costa Rica's social platforms will be able to virtually experience a bit of Costa Rica's 28 environmentally protected national parks, which include tens of thousands of acres of rain and cloud forests, active volcanoes, beaches and waterfalls, allowing visitors to get a sneak-peek into its most exquisite offerings.

An added appeal for Costa Rica and its position as a Central American tourist destination has been its commitment to giving back to the planet and to its people. Due to these efforts, the country has become an ecological haven which is hosted by warm people who are proud and eager to show visitors their wonderful land. Their pride is translated into the vast amount of knowledge that they individually possess, turning any vacation to the country into an educational experience, in addition to being adventurous and relaxing. This attention to detail is what keeps visitors coming back to enjoy its natural wonders.

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### GALLUP POLL NAMES COSTA RICA HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE AMERICAS

***By setting forth a philosophy of peace with nature and the world, Costa Rica proves to be one of the happiest places on Earth***

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, August 2, 2010** – Costa Rica, the world's foremost leader in sustainable tourism practices, has begun to reap the rewards for its commitment to social and environmental preservation alike. The country's philosophy to being at peace with humanity and nature have now set the stage for a country that is recognized internationally as one of the most stable, most ethical, one of the cleanest and consequently, one of the happiest places on Earth.

A recent Gallup Poll has named Costa Rica one of the Happiest Places on Earth citing its people's health, prosperity and overall satisfaction with life. So, what has this small nation done right to create this type of society and, more importantly, what kind of changes can other countries make to achieve a little more happiness in everyday lives?

When Costa Rica made the decision to eliminate its army in 1948, it seemed like an unlikely and naïve choice, at best. Then, in 1978, Costa Rica took it a step further and declared 25% of its territory as protected land in an effort to preserve the rich biodiversity that today has made the country one of the most sought after ecological destinations in the world.

While these decisions were highly criticized in their time, Costa Rica, today, has come full circle and proven that a life focused on the well-being of the people and the planet is the best recipe to living a long and happy life. Their zest for life shows because while many initially come here for the country's natural beauty and an endless choice of activities, ultimately, the longest lasting impression they leave with is the kindness and joy that the Costa Rican people offer.

All of these choices have enabled Costa Rica to be a society that can count on accessible education for all and a nationwide healthcare system that even provides for tourists in the country. Ticos, as Costa Ricans call themselves, enjoy a literacy rate that is comparable to any other well-developed nation, equal rights for all, a political system which allows for strong participation from its citizens, and an almost complete elimination of fossil fuels for electric production.

As a destination that offers visitors a chance to experience the beauty of the Earth and its people, Costa Rica began to see a growth in its tourism industry. In order to mitigate the negative effects of tourism development in the country, Costa Rica quickly took action and in 1996 it established the Certification for Sustainable Tourism Program (CST) which outlines four main pillars for developing a property or operation that would reduce the impact that it would on the environment, its population and its culture as well.

Over the past year, Costa Rica, as a country, and its tourism sector alike, have received an unprecedented amount of recognition for its staggering achievements at the environmental and social level. Organizations like the World Economic Index Forum and the Environmental Performance Indicator developed by Yale University and Columbia University have ranked Costa Rica as the best place to do business and the cleanest destination in the Americas, respectively.

The CST program has not only been well received by the industry, with over 100 hotels and tour operators certified, but it has also been regarded by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as the model for sustainable tourism in Latin America. Additionally, the CST program was recognized by the III Virtual Congress on Latin American Tourism Industry and Destination Competitiveness with the "Tourism for All" award in the category of "Innovation in Tourism and Hotels."

All of these efforts have positioned its tourism industry as one of the most sustainable in the world and it has no shortage of awards either. In the past year alone, establishments such as Green Hotels of Costa Rica, Lapa Rios Ecolodge, Rios Tropicales, Hotel Punta Islita, El Silencio Lodge, Nature Air, among many others, have been recipients of sustainable tourism awards and recognitions from prestigious organizations such as *National Geographic*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, Rainforest Alliance and the World Travel and Tourism Council. Furthermore, Ethical Traveler named the country as one of its choices for Top 10 Ethical Destinations for the industry's strong environmental efforts.

Costa Rica has always understood the importance of being able to be innovative and evolve its strategy in order to provide sustainable solutions for an ever-changing world. With a successful certification program under its belt, Costa Rica declared a goal to be carbon neutral by 2021, a goal that has been embraced by all and in two short years has begun to generate an astounding amount of critical acclaim throughout its tourism industry.

The key to happiness, as Costa Rica has proven, isn't necessarily limited to the act of consuming less. Rather, it is the philosophy that when people take the time to take care of and appreciate the things around them that aren't replaceable, such as the environment, their

people and their culture, then they begin to create a society that finds happiness in the simple things that the world has to offer.

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#### About Costa Rica

Costa Rica is located in Central America, nestled between Nicaragua and Panama, and bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and the west by the Pacific Ocean. This small country represents only .01 % of the planet's surface and it shelters almost 4% of the existing world's biodiversity. It has given priority to the conservation of its natural resources, protecting 26% of its national territory through the creation of National Parks and other natural areas. The country also offers world-class eco-tourism and adventure travel. The options are unlimited for any discriminating traveler: horseback riding on a secluded beach; hiking through the lush whispering greenery of a rainforest; having an exhilarating experience on a white-water rafting trip, observing the tropical forests from a canopy tour; surfing the blue waves of either coast; experiencing a quite, close encounter with different species of birds and wildlife; and enjoying the diverse culture and hospitality of the Ticos.

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**Costa Rica travel industry launches travel deals for the fall**  
***Travel packages perfect for any type of traveler***

**SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, August 30, 2010 –** Costa Rica, the jewel of Central America and global leader of sustainable tourism, has put together a broad variety of vacation packages and discounts to help travelers beat the upcoming winter blues. Travel deals are available beginning Labor Day weekend with most packages running through the end of the November.

Whether someone is looking to be adventurous, relax with the family, explore nature, take in a second honeymoon with someone special, or all of the above, Costa Rica has a special offer in hand. There are over 25 special travel promotions running throughout the country which range from additional free nights to awesome 10 day tours around the country that are a steal. These travel promotions will only be valid for a limited time, so travelers shouldn't miss out on the chance to book today.

Vacation packages and promotions (LINK HERE) will be running across the country and in all of your favorite Costa Rica destinations, including:

**Alajuela** – This province is most well-known for its volcano tourism and hot springs, particularly the Arenal Volcano, the third most active in the world. Travel deals to this region include stay two nights and get one free; free volcano tours and up to 50% off your lodging. Many of them also include free breakfast with your stay.

**Cartago/Heredia** – This region speaks to coffee lovers and adventure travelers alike. Visitors can take advantage of these travel promotions and get a free tour of an organic coffee farm in Heredia or visit the near-by Pacuare River in Cartago for some white-water rafting.

**Guanacaste** – Traditionally one of the more popular destinations in Costa Rica, Guanacaste is famous for its amazing beaches and its tropical dry climate. Travel discounts and deals to this region include great room and tour rates that range from 15-35% off. You can get a great deal on spa services as well.

**Puntarenas** – Whether you want surf or just observe some of nature's greatest offerings, Puntarenas has something for you. Travel offers extend from the Mid to South Pacific and start



at just \$49 a night per person. For that extra special travel experience, throw in a whale watching tour.

**San Jose** – Tour operators are offering some great cross country tour packages for those that don't want to miss out on a single thing that Costa Rica has to offer. Travel deals start as low as \$610 for a four-day, three-night package for two people. For those who prefer to explore on their own, car rental/lodging packages are also available. Travelers should make sure to visit some of San Jose's many cultural offering while they are there.

To view a complete listing of these hotels and operators, please click [here](#):

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**Green travelers recognize Costa Rica as the only destination with a green brand**  
***Country solidifies its leadership in sustainable tourism initiatives***

**March 24, 2010, SAN JOSE, Costa Rica** – Costa Rica, the leader in sustainable tourism development, has been recognized as the only destination with a green brand by the Green Traveler Report, the first comprehensive study on green travelers by Community Marketing, Inc. (CMI). This survey, released in February 2010, was conducted by CMI and polled 1,736 travelers who labeled themselves as green-conscious consumers.

The CMIGreen Traveler Report was designed to provide industry leaders with information and insights to understand, reposition and leverage the opportunities of the emerging sustainable travel marketplace. The study discovered purchasing habits, travel behavior, environmental commitment, expectations and motivations of the green travel consumer.

Avid travelers recognize that the future of tourism consists of environmentally friendly practices and sought-after "green" itineraries, one of the distinguished offerings of Costa Rica. "Walking the walk" is what differentiates Costa Rica from other countries and with its national parks and reserves covering over 26 percent of the country, Costa Rica has become one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world. Additionally, its internationally-recognized programs like the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) and Blue Ecological Flag (BAE) program have helped in maintaining its natural heritage for over the last 50 years.

A big contributor to the country's success has been the creation of its CST program in 1995. Designed to encourage the responsible development of its tourism industry, the Costa Rica Tourist Board developed this certification program which recognizes properties and operators based on their level of sustainability with a ranking of one to five leaves. The accreditation system awards leaves on the basis of the following four pillars: interaction with the environment, waste management, interaction with the client and interaction with the community. Today, there are 154 properties and operators certified under the program. Additionally, the CST program has been recognized as the model for sustainable tourism for Latin America by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Costa Rica has the most beautiful natural beaches, many of which have received the Blue Ecologic Flag Award. This award identifies beaches where local communities work and make a big effort to maintain them in the best conditions for the enjoyment of the tourist. The "Blue Flag" program provides strong incentives to hotels, local tourism boards, and coastal communities to work together to protect Costa Rica's beaches. This program is an adaptation of a highly successful program of the same name launched in Europe in 1985.

Additionally, CMI placed importance on Climate Conscious Travel (CCT), an agreement signed by The National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO) and the National Fund for Forestry Financing (FONAFIFO) which allows Costa Rica to offer travelers the option of traveling to a carbon neutral destination. The priority placed on the conservation of the country's natural resources has been a topic of much focus in recent years. In turn, tourism businesses have assumed responsibility of the industry's production of CO<sub>2</sub> – a move towards the country's overall goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2021. Through this program, the industry will be helping to mitigate the nearly 6,723,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> that is produced from the approximate 1.3 million visitors that arrive to Costa Rica every year.

CMI Green also demonstrated that while the effect of human contact is inevitable, Costa Rica has made a clear example of the net benefit of preventing deterioration from destructive agriculture, mining and industrialization. Although any kind of travel to sensitive areas has an impact on the environment, environmental precautions can minimize long-term damage. An important part of achieving this includes educational initiatives that teach local communities and

travelers about how they should interact with the environment. Recycling and sustainable practices established by Costa Rica's travel industry, are a few examples of these precautions.

Costa Rica, which has become a perennial favorite with eco travelers and has been successful with establishing top-of-the-mind green travel awareness, will continue to demonstrate and be innovative with its sustainable initiatives. Today, Costa Rica offers over 1,000 miles of coastline, 12 different types of micro-climates, four types of forests as well as a variety of experiential travel options all the while conserving the planet's natural resources.

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**ADVENTURE RACE WORLD SERIES "DASHES" TO COSTA RICA**

*Costa Rica chosen as the first country in Central America to host the race*

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, August 10, 2010** – Costa Rica will be home to the Adventure Race World Series 2010 (ARWS) where more than 20 teams from over 12 different countries will join in the adrenaline-filled race towards the finish line. The race, taking place August 20 to 28, will go through a non-stop secret course which will include some of Costa Rica's most pristine terrain – more than 500 km of forest, beach, river and mountain. ARWS will be conducting a total of 11 classifying events worldwide.

The co-ed teams of four will each be completing challenging activities on Costa Rica's rugged geography. Activities like trekking, mountain biking, canopy, kayaking, ropes, and rafting, without the help of any motorized transportation, will be practiced for five days straight. Along the way, participants must find 39 different checkpoints while navigating through the country with just maps and compasses. Even the most experienced athletes will find the Costa Rican terrain and its unique reference points challenging.

Costa Rica has long established its reputation as one of the top adventure destinations in the world. Close to 70 percent of all visitors to the country participate in at least one adventure activity during their stay. The country offers some of the top-rated rivers in the world for white-water rafting and boasts over 1,000 miles of coastline, 12 different types of micro-climates, and four types of forests as well as a variety of experiential travel options.

For those who love adventure and can't make it to Costa Rica this year, a step by step follow-up of all competing teams will be available online on through the SPOT satellite technology, at the ARCR official website [www.ARCostaRica.com](http://www.ARCostaRica.com). Teams will also be able to post and receive messages and support along the course.

The first Costa Rica Adventure Race is sponsored by the Costa Rican Tourism Board, as well as Toyota, Horizontes Travel Agency, Aventuras del Sarapiqui, and Toyota Rent a Car.

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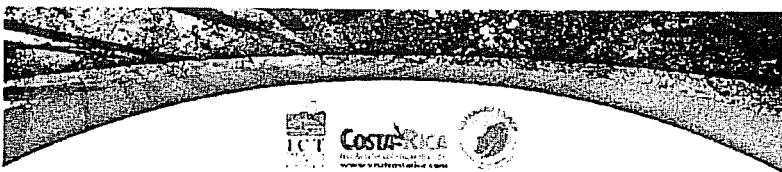
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## **INTERNATIONAL LEADERS IN COSTA RICA**

***Costa Rica Minister of Tourism and top environmental leaders from across the globe  
reunite to share their strategies and expertise on sustainable tourism***

**San Jose, Costa Rica- November 1, 2010** – The Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT), partners with the Costa Rican National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO), to host the Second International Conference: Planet, People, Peace (P3) in San Jose, Costa Rica November 1st – 3rd, at the Ramada Plaza Herradura Hotel.

Launched in 2009, the ***Planet, People, Peace*** conference, also known as **P3**, showcased over 200 people from Bhutan, United States, Japan and Central America as well as the Costa Rican tourism sector and brought their knowledge of sustainability to the forefront of the tourism industry.

This year, these international leaders and representatives of the industry will continue to provide a platform of education about sustainable and responsible tourism practices. The exceptional lineup of speakers for this week's conference includes:

- Kyra Cruz, President of Canturural (National Chamber of Rural-Community Tourism) and Executive Director of ACTUAR, Costa Rica
- Gary Dunham, Director of Operations and Senior Mentor for the Climate Project with Al Gore, USA
- Erika Harms, Executive Director of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GTSC) and Senior Advisor on Tourism at the United Nations Foundation, USA
- Carlos Ricardo Benavides, Minister of Tourism, Costa Rica

"It has been amazing to witness the positive response that the P3 conference had in its first run in 2009," said Carlos Ricardo Benavides, Costa Rica Minister of Tourism. "As a result, we realized that it is imperative for Costa Rica to continue providing a platform that would allow leaders on the environmental front to come together and provide new insights on the future of tourism."

Globally, Costa Rica has taken a leadership role in providing sustainable tourism by serving as a model for any other countries aspiring to develop their sustainability.

For more information on the P3 conference visit: <http://www.planetpeoplepeace.com/>

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**PEOPLE, PEACE CONFERENCE WRAPS UP IN COSTA RICA AND LEAVES AN IMPACT THAT INSPIRES THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

*World leaders attended the three day conference*

**San Jose, Costa Rica- November 3, 2010** – The Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT), and the Costa Rican National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO), welcomed renowned leaders from across the globe to their Second International Conference: Planet, People, Peace (P3) in San Jose on Monday. The conference takes place November 1st through 3rd, at the Ramada Plaza Herradura Hotel.

The second day focused on projects and achievements in climate change. Speakers of the day brought their own unique perspectives and experiences to the discussion panels, while also coming to a general consensus that environmental awareness and preservation of natural resources is an ongoing process with many more global hurdles to overcome.

Martha Vega, one of the Board of Directors for the Costa Rican National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO) said, "We must work together, we can't do it alone. The public sector is extremely important in helping the private sector achieve its sustainability goals. Strategic alliances between tourism destinations are a key factor in developing sustainable tourism."

Alex Major, Founder and Executive Director of the Green Flight Foundation, U.S.A. says, "Conservation is the critical component of preserving the global environment. We must think globally, we are all citizens of the earth."

Ricardo Mora from the Department of the Marine and Maritime Zones at the Costa Rican Tourism Board emphasizes, "In order to continue to move forward with positive climate changes we must use our resources appropriately and not over consume them, this has to be done on a global level."

For more information on the P3 conference visit: <http://www.planetpeoplepeace.com/>

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## **About Costa Rica**

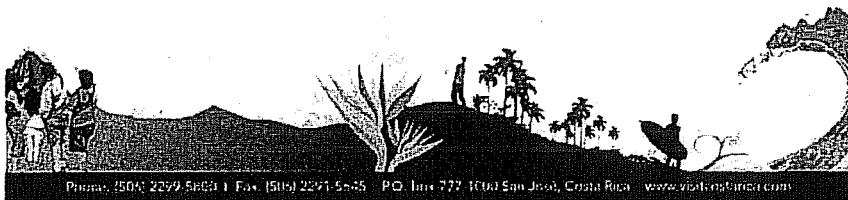
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## **INTERNATIONAL LEADERS AT PLANET, PEOPLE, PEACE CONFERENCE IN COSTA RICA EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY RURAL TOURISM**

***Costa Rica Minister of Tourism Carlos Ricardo Benavides welcomes tourism experts from around the world and stresses community building as a need for sustainability***

**San Jose, Costa Rica- November 2, 2010** – The Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT), and the Costa Rican National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO), welcomed renown leaders from across the globe to their Second International Conference: Planet, People, Peace (P3) in San Jose yesterday. The conference takes place November 1st through 3rd, at the Ramada Plaza Herradura Hotel.

The first day focused on the importance of building community rural tourism, one of the initiatives that has represented an important means of development for those rural communities potentially capable of competing with other high quality attraction sites. This is a significant tool for the development of the communities that enhance a country's identity.

One of the speakers of the day, Kyra Cruz, President of Canturural (National Chamber of Rural-Community Tourism) and Executive Director of ACTUAR in Costa Rica explained that building tourism experiences in rural areas integrates them with the local culture and enhances sustainability.

Alberto Lopez Chaves, Director of Sustainability at the Costa Rica Tourism Board says, "A large percentage of every dollar that goes toward tourism in Costa Rica directly serves and benefits our local communities, mainly in activities related with community rural tourism and the services they provide. Any company that wants to build a presence here is strongly encouraged to support our rural communities as part of the sustainable tourism that Costa Rica practices."

All the speakers of the day brought their own unique experiences and knowledge about community building, but there was an overall consensus that this is a critical component. Joseph Ole Shuel, Director of the II N'gwesi Community Lodge in Kenya stated, "The key to cultural tourism is that everyone should feel like they are participating for a greater cause. You have to look at different ways that people can contribute and add their own unique value to the community."

For more information on the P3 conference visit: <http://www.planetpeoplepeace.com/>

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## About Costa Rica

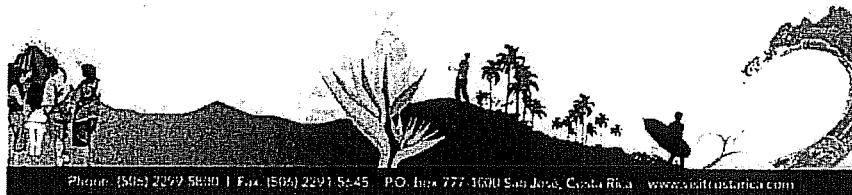
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## SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO SPEAK DURING THE SECOND ANNUAL PLANET, PEOPLE, PEACE CONFERENCE IN COSTA RICA

*Costa Rica Minister of Tourism joins environmental leaders to speak of the successes and upcoming challenges for sustainable tourism*

**San Jose, Costa Rica- September 27, 2010** - The Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT), in a joint effort with the Costa Rican National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO), will be hosting the world's foremost leaders in sustainable tourism at its Second International Conference Planet, People, Peace (P3). The conference will be held in San Jose, Costa Rica November 1 - 3, 2010 at the Ramada Plaza Herradura Hotel.

Launched in 2009, the **Planet, People, Peace** conference, known as the P3 conference, serves as a platform for the sharing of best practices by international leaders on the subject. The conference also serves as a more sophisticated and larger effort to stimulate a dialogue about the growing challenges that tourism entities around the world will face in the coming years. The Planet, People, Peace conference will include participation from representatives of the tourism industry, those involved in public institutions and private sector companies, independent professionals, students, as well as the international community at large.

"It has been amazing to witness the positive response that the P3 conference had in its first run in 2009," said Carlos Ricardo Benavides, Costa Rica Minister of Tourism. "As a result, we realized that it is imperative for Costa Rica to continue providing a platform that would allow leaders on the environmental front to come together and provide new insights on the future of tourism."

Costa Rica has incredible leaders from the private sector who have helped in providing constant innovation for the country. Among them is Glenn Jampol, one of the creators of the country's internationally recognized Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) program and President of CANAECO.

"We heard from those who attended P3 2009 that this conference is of great importance and value to the tourism industry," said Mr. Jampol. "Conservation and preservation of natural resources as well as the tools needed to avoid environmental problems are subjects that are priorities for many countries".

As tourist become more conscious about environmental issues, travel destination that employ contemporary models of sustainability are more frequently chosen. Costa Rica has crafted an innovative model that not only creates a responsible destination, but one that also allows tourists to contribute to solutions and responsible tourism. For more information on P3 please visit.

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## **PLANET, PEOPLE, PEACE CONFERENCE WRAPS UP IN COSTA RICA AND LEAVES A STRONG IMPACT THAT INSPIRES THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

***World leaders attended the three day conference and make a mark***

**San Jose, Costa Rica- November 4, 2010** – The Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT), and the Costa Rican National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO), welcomed renowned leaders from across the globe to their Second International Conference: Planet, People, Peace (P3) this week in San Jose. The conference takes place November 1st through 3rd, at the Ramada Plaza Herradura Hotel.

Throughout the week, global experts on sustainable tourism gave presentations and held discussion groups focusing on measures that can improve sustainability throughout the tourism industry with topics focusing on community rural tourism, achievements in climate change and changes, discrepancies and marketing for sustainable tourism certifications.

Erika Harms, Executive Director of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GTSC) and Senior Advisor on Tourism and the United Nations Foundation, U.S.A. stated, "Sustainability is more than being environmentally conscious. It is about making sure what you are offering as a tourism destination is there while preserving your cultural heritage. Globally, we must follow this example."

Lelei TuiSamoa LeLaulu from the Leadership Council Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management School of Business at George Washington University, U.S.A. emphasized, "Tourism is the largest and fastest growing industry in the world. We have to use the large amount of resources that we have to save the planet."

Glenn Jampol, President of the National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO) stated, "Costa Rica is proud to be a world leader in sustainable tourism. We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to welcome these renowned leaders from throughout the world to this special conference. What's important to remember from all of our discussions is that financial sustainability is what leads to and provides a sustainable destination, by following that model globally, we can achieve many great things."

The conference closed with an informative presentation by Costa Rica's Minister of Tourism, Carlos Ricardo Benavides, on the initiatives and high level standards Costa Rica adheres to in order to maintain and further develop sustainability throughout the country.

The Costa Rica Tourism Board supports these types of conferences with the goal of establishing thoughtful discussion groups between the many diverse tourism industry groups and learning from the global experts that take a leadership role in developing sustainable tourism at the international level.

For more information on the P3 conference visit: <http://www.planetpeoplepeace.com/>

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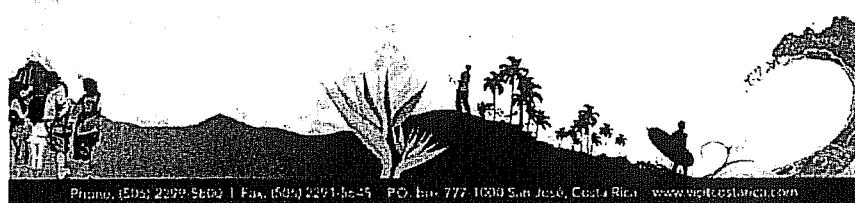
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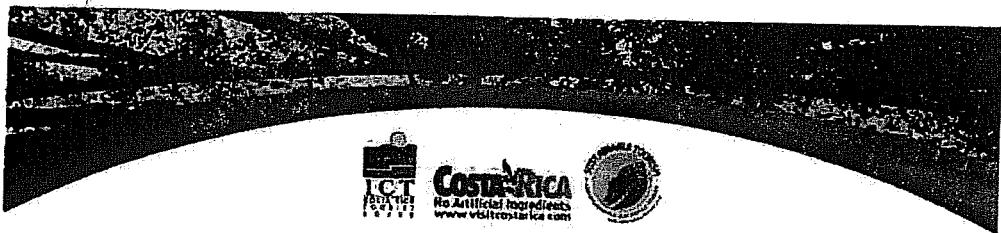
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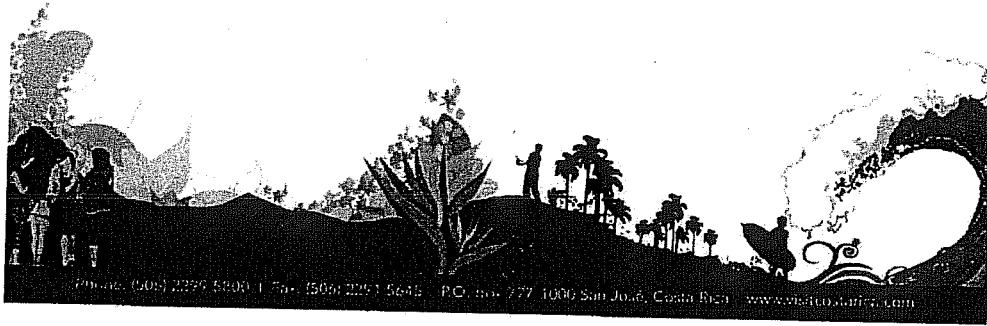
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**Costa Rica celebrates the new decade with an increase in tourist arrivals during  
the first two months of the year  
*2010 brings much optimism to the Costa Rica tourism industry***

**March 18, 2010, SAN JOSE, Costa Rica** – The Costa Rica Tourism Board (ICT) has announced that tourist arrivals to Costa Rica, both by air and land, grew in January and February when compared to the same period in 2009. Official data shows an increase of 4.3 percent in January and 16.5 percent in February, signaling a welcomed turn around for its industry. In the first two months of the year, the country received 428,233 visitors, almost ten percent more tourist arrivals in comparison to the same time period in 2009.

"These figures are similar to those recorded in early 2008 when tourism in the country had not yet been hit by the international economic crisis," said Allan Flores, the country's Minister of Tourism. "Although there are still regions and businesses affected by the drop in numbers recorded in 2009, these numbers promise that we are on a good road to recovery," he said.

The growth in arrivals this year is more evident in the increase of aerial transportation. The Juan Santamaria International Airport, one of two of the country's international airports, welcomed 227,026 visitors, a nine percent increase from 2009. Additionally, an increase of 24 percent was seen at the Daniel Oduber International Airport in Liberia in comparison to the same time period.

Costa Rica's proximity to major hubs in the United States and the multitude of flight options makes it easy for travelers to vacation there. It is a two and half hour flight from Miami, a five-hour flight from New York, a four-hour flight from Dallas and a six-hour flight from Los Angeles.

Additionally, Costa Rica's 32 environmentally protected national parks, which include tens of thousands of acres of rain and cloud forests, active volcanoes, beaches and waterfalls, allow visitors to experience nature in its most pristine state through activities like hiking, rafting, canyoning, canopy tours, rock climbing and surfing. With all of these offerings, it is no wonder that everyone from families to couples even school groups yearn to visit the country.

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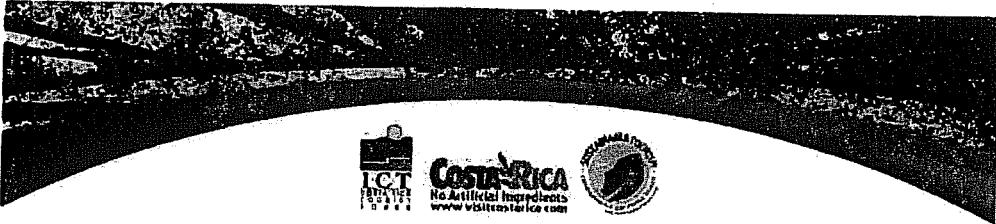
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**Green travelers recognize Costa Rica as the only destination with a green brand**  
***Country solidifies its leadership in sustainable tourism initiatives***

**March 24, 2010, SAN JOSE, Costa Rica** – Costa Rica, the leader in sustainable tourism development, has been recognized as the only destination with a green brand by the Green Traveler Report, the first comprehensive study on green travelers by Community Marketing, Inc. (CMI). This survey, released in February 2010, was conducted by CMI and polled 1,736 travelers who labeled themselves as green-conscious consumers.

The CMIGreen Traveler Report was designed to provide industry leaders with information and insights to understand, reposition and leverage the opportunities of the emerging sustainable travel marketplace. The study discovered purchasing habits, travel behavior, environmental commitment, expectations and motivations of the green travel consumer.

Avid travelers recognize that the future of tourism consists of environmentally friendly practices and sought-after “green” itineraries, one of the distinguished offerings of Costa Rica. “Walking the walk” is what differentiates Costa Rica from other countries and with its national parks and reserves covering over 26 percent of the country, Costa Rica has become one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world. Additionally, its internationally-recognized programs like the Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) and Blue Ecological Flag (BAE) program have helped in maintaining its natural heritage for over the last 50 years.

A big contributor to the country's success has been the creation of its CST program in 1995. Designed to encourage the responsible development of its tourism industry, the Costa Rica Tourist Board developed this certification program which recognizes properties and operators based on their level of sustainability with a ranking of one to five leaves. The accreditation system awards leaves on the basis of the following four pillars: interaction with the environment, waste management, interaction with the client and interaction with the community. Today, there are 154 properties and operators certified under the program. Additionally, the CST program has been recognized as the model for sustainable tourism for Latin America by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Costa Rica has the most beautiful natural beaches, many of which have received the Blue Ecologic Flag Award. This award identifies beaches where local communities work and make a big effort to maintain them in the best conditions for the enjoyment of the tourist. The "Blue Flag" program provides strong incentives to hotels, local tourism boards, and coastal communities to work together to protect Costa Rica's beaches. This program is an adaptation of a highly successful program of the same name launched in Europe in 1985.

Additionally, CMI placed importance on Climate Conscious Travel (CCT), an agreement signed by The National Chamber of Ecotourism (CANAECO) and the National Fund for Forestry Financing (FONAFIFO) which allows Costa Rica to offer travelers the option of traveling to a carbon neutral destination. The priority placed on the conservation of the country's natural resources has been a topic of much focus in recent years. In turn, tourism businesses have assumed responsibility of the industry's production of CO<sub>2</sub> – a move towards the country's overall goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2021. Through this program, the industry will be helping to mitigate the nearly 6,723,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> that is produced from the approximate 1.3 million visitors that arrive to Costa Rica every year.

CMIGreen also demonstrated that while the effect of human contact is inevitable, Costa Rica has made a clear example of the net benefit of preventing deterioration from destructive agriculture, mining and industrialization. Although any kind of travel to sensitive areas has an impact on the environment, environmental precautions can minimize long-term damage. An important part of achieving this includes educational initiatives that teach local communities and

travelers about how they should interact with the environment. Recycling and sustainable practices established by Costa Rica's travel industry, are a few examples of these precautions.

Costa Rica, which has become a perennial favorite with eco travelers and has been successful with establishing top-of-the-mind green travel awareness, will continue to demonstrate and be innovative with its sustainable initiatives. Today, Costa Rica offers over 1,000 miles of coastline, 12 different types of micro-climates, four types of forests as well as a variety of experiential travel options all the while conserving the planet's natural resources.

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**Costa Rica to highlight its broad variety of tourism offerings during its 2010 EXPOTUR event**

***Exhibitors will showcase their products according to their tourism offerings including rural, well-being, and conventions, among others***

**SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, April 19, 2010 -** EXPOTUR 2010, Costa Rica Travel Mart and Central America's prominent travel trade show will take place May 16 to May 23 in the Convention Center Ramada Plaza Herradura Hotel in San Antonio de Belen, Costa Rica. This year's expo will place a strong emphasis on the different tourism products that the country offers including rural, volunteer, adventure, luxury, family, well-being and honeymoon, among others. EXPOTUR 2010 will also have "islands" of exhibitors that will be represented by the different regions and products of the country to make it easier for participants to find their preferred destination and activities in Costa Rica. Tourism representatives from Turrialba, Manuel Antonio and the Caribbean coast will be on-hand to host their own "islands" and help visitors learn more about their regions.

The introduction of "islands" to the event was set up with the intention of highlighting and strengthening those market segments that have been key to Costa Rica's success as a destination while giving exposure to other developing or innovative areas of the industry. By segmenting the show in this way, participants will be able to obtain the products and services of each region in an easier and more specialized manner.



Participants will also be able to attend a variety of seminars which will cover a wide gamut of topics pertaining to the Costa Rica tourism product. Some of these include seminars about rural tourism, conventions and bureaus, medical tourism, baby-boomer travel and educational tourism. Seminars will be held on May 18 and 19. For more information on these and other educational seminars, please visit: [The EXPOTUR Site](#)

The Costa Rican Association of Professionals in Tourism (ACOPROT), the event organizer, in alliance with the National Fund of Forest Financing (FONAFIFO) is also implementing measures to mitigate carbon emissions generated at EXPOTUR. In order to compensate the carbon emissions, the organizations have pledged to a series of tree-planting events to preserve the rainforests of the country. This is the second year EXPOTUR has offered a carbon neutral event.

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## **COSTA RICA'S TOURISM SECTOR ON THE RISE IN 2010**

***Country starts off 2010 with a positive upswing in international arrivals for the first quarter of the year***

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, April 22, 2010** – While 2009 was a difficult year for the tourism industry, it seems like things are looking up in Costa Rica. The country has reported an 11 percent rise in international tourism arrivals for the first quarter of the year, in comparison to the same period in 2009. The first three months of 2010 welcomed 636,434 international visitors by air, land and sea, providing encouraging news to those in the industry.

There was particularly good news from North American travelers, Costa Rica's most important market, as arrivals from this region increased almost 17 percent in the first quarter of 2010 compared to the same period of 2009. Many are expecting that the boost in travel from North America could be a sign that the worst of the crisis is over and that travelers are ready to get back out there and experience the world.

For Costa Rica Tourism Minister, Allan Flores, these numbers indicate a positive trend for the current high season already taking place, but as the low season approaches, the Costa Rica Tourist Board is taking measures to promote national tourism to different regions of the country to maintain the high numbers.

"These are strong signs of recovery for the tourism sector," said Minister of Tourism, Allan Flores. "We are approaching the levels of early 2008 arrival figures in the months prior to the onset of the global economic crisis; but we're cautious as the low season starts soon," he said.

In the case of the main international airport Juan Santamaría (SJO), the numbers indicate an estimated increase of almost 10 percent, representing approximately 352,962 tourists, while the Daniel Oduber airport (LIR), located in Liberia, Guanacaste,



experienced an increase of 27.4 percent, with 79,482 visitors. This data is gathered and analyzed by the ICT based on information from the Director Migration and Foreign Arrivals.

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**Costa Rica is honored with the TripAdvisor Traveler's Choice Awards 2010**  
*The country is the top choice beach and spa destination for travelers in Central and South America*

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, May 6, 2010** – Costa Rica became the hands down winner in the TripAdvisor 2010 Traveler's Choice Awards in the beach and spa destinations category in Central and South America. The country nabbed the top spot in both categories and made up almost half of the reader's choices when it came to sun, sand and relaxation. The TripAdvisor Traveler's Choice Awards are based on the millions of reviews and opinions from travelers around the world.

Santa Teresa beach on Costa Rica's Pacific coast came in first place with readers, not only for its crystal-clear waters, but also for its surfing, fishing, snorkeling, kite-surfing and great yoga services. Other beaches in Costa Rica to be recognized by TripAdvisor.com users include the sun and sand of Manuel Antonio National Park; the funky vibe of Puerto Viejo on the Caribbean coast; and the white sand beaches of Playa Samara on the Pacific Northwest.

Readers chose the Arenal Volcano as their top destination for spa and relaxation in Central or South America. Famous for its hot springs, which derive from its even more famous active volcano, Arenal provides visitors with incredible access to wildlife as well as adventure activities like white-water rafting, windsurfing or horseback riding. Other Costa Rica hot spots for indulging yourself included the number one beach, Santa Teresa; the biodiversity of Manuel Antonio National Park and the shell-filled sands of Playa Conchal. Moreover, the Arenal Volcano placed tenth in the entire world for relaxation and spa activities.



Costa Rica's biodiverse nature has long made it an attraction for travelers. Its 28 environmentally protected national parks, which include tens of thousands of acres of rain and cloud forests, active volcanoes, beaches and waterfalls, allow visitors to experience nature in its most pristine state through activities like hiking, rafting, canyoning, canopy tours and rock climbing. If scuba diving or surfing is what the traveler seeks, Costa Rica offers over a thousand miles of coastline on the Caribbean and Pacific coast that are ideal for any marine lover. As a result, Costa Rica has become the ideal destination for all types of travelers ranging from families to couples and thrill seekers alike.

#### **About Costa Rica**

Costa Rica is located in Central America, nestled between Nicaragua and Panama, and bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and the west by the Pacific Ocean. This small country represents only .05 percent of the planet's surface yet its land shelters 5 percent of the world's biodiversity and its waters are home to 4 percent of the planet's marine life. It has given priority to the conservation of its natural resources, protecting 26 percent of its national territory through the creation of National Parks and other natural areas. The country also offers world-class eco-tourism and adventure travel. The options are unlimited for any discriminating traveler: horseback riding on a secluded beach; hiking through the lush whispering greenery of a rainforest; having an exhilarating experience on a white-water rafting trip, observing the tropical forests from a canopy tour; surfing the blue waves of either coast; experiencing a quiet, close encounter with different species of birds and wildlife; and enjoying the diverse culture and hospitality of the Ticos.

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**Costa Rica Leads Global Partnership to Make Sustainable Tourism Initiatives Mandatory**  
*The country joins forces with United Nations and other organizations to promote sustainable tourism at a global level*

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, May 12, 2010** – Costa Rica, in a joint effort with France, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and other U.N. agencies have announced today the creation of the U.N. Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism. This organization has been formed to help governments and businesses make all tourism, everywhere, become more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

The new partnership, which will be led by Costa Rica and France, is designed to identify and disseminate successful initiatives from anywhere in the world and make them available elsewhere. It will also apply policy recommendations and lessons learned in integrating sustainability in tourism and develop new tools and projects where no existing solution has been found. Given its expansive network of government entities, industry associations, environmental and social organizations and U.N agencies, it is expected to have worldwide outreach. Additionally, the support and participation of financial institutions will enable the replication of good practices throughout.

Since 2008, Costa Rica, led by its Minister of Tourism, Carlos Ricardo Benavides, has chaired the Executive Council for the UNWTO and has formed part of its World Committee on Tourism Ethics, as well as its Sustainable Development Committee.

"The Partnership will be an up-to-date, dynamic forum where countries that are interested in tourism that is truly sustainable will be able to learn from the successful efforts of the other members and obtain technical assistance, and which will promote constant dialogue, the exchange of experiences, and seeking solutions to the problems that are common to the tourism sector," says Carlos Ricardo Benavides, Costa Rica's Minister of Tourism.



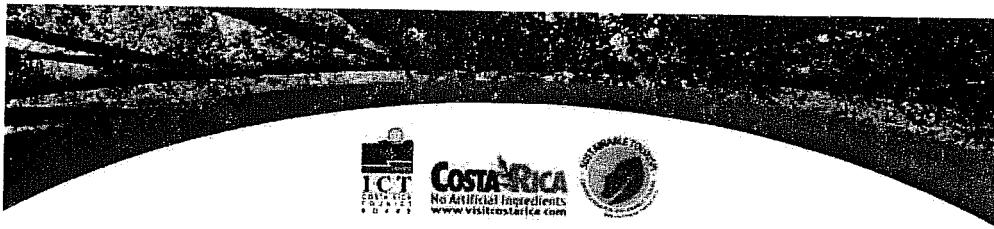
According to UNEP spokesman, Arab Hoballah, "The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism aims to transform the way tourism is done worldwide by seeking out and replicating *successful* ideas and projects from around the world to help tourism conserve nature and culture, produce wealth for local communities, countries, employees, and owners, while reducing its negative impacts. Poorly managed tourism can destroy the very natural and cultural attractions that tourists come to see, and lead to water shortages, impoverishment of local communities, social ills, and, eventually, to the decline of the destination and business failure."

While Costa Rica has long been known for the biodiversity of its land, its position as a leader in sustainable tourism began with the creation of its Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) program in 1995, which today is regarded by the UNWTO as the model for sustainable tourism in Latin America. The CST gives properties and operators an outline for developing their tourism business in a sustainable fashion which benefits not only the environment, but also the communities which surround it. Today there are 154 properties and operators which are certified, with many more waiting to receive their accreditation.

Through programs like the CST and the country's Blue Ecological Flag program, which brings citizens together to maintain the water quality of its beaches and its communities, the Costa Rica tourism industry has set the standard by proving that sustainable tourism is not only beneficial to the environment and to the people, but that it is a financially viable business model and debunking the myth that sustainability must be synonymous with poverty or lack of comforts when traveling.

Costa Rica's leadership and innovation in this arena has grown even stronger in the past few years. In 2007 the country announced its *Peace With Nature* campaign, which calls for all countries in the world to enhance actions and political commitments to revert, through a joint effort, the environmental degradation tendencies caused by human actions in the planet's ecosystems. The campaign includes a variety of programs to address environmental issues such as territory planning and management; a coastal marine program; a program to help curve climate change and education and communication about the importance of sustainability and sustainability efforts.

Additionally, the same year the country launched its national reforestation program which challenged companies and individuals to plant one million trees that would help reforest the country. Its citizens surpassed the goal overwhelmingly with three million trees and in 2008, when it strived to match the accomplishments of the previous year, Costa Rica became the country with the highest reforestation in the world planting over seven million trees.



All of these and other efforts from the public and private sector alike have helped to garner Costa Rica an unprecedented amount of recognition for its commitment including Cleanest Country in the Americas in 2009 and 2010 as determined by the Environmental Performance Index developed by the prestigious Yale and Columbia Universities. The study also ranked it third and fourth in the entire world, respectively. Additionally, the National Resources Defense Council named Costa Rica as a Biogem, the first whole country to receive the honor.

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**Costa Rica offers an opportunity for those traveling to Europe to reroute their travel plans**

***The industry opens its doors and offers specials to those affected by the recent travel crisis***

**SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, May 17, 2010** – In response to the latest airline crisis caused by the volcano eruption in Iceland, the Costa Rica Tourist Board and its travel industry have come together to offer travelers a variety of wonderful packages that will allow them to spend their hard earned vacation days in an exciting destination. Given that Costa Rica is a destination with a broad variety of tourism products, distressed travelers are sure to find something to fit their needs and still get the promise of a wonderful travel experience.

Costa Rica is known as much for its leadership in sustainable tourism as it is for its incredible offering of activities and experiences for all types of travelers. Whether someone is looking to be adventurous, relax with the family, explore nature, take in a second honeymoon with someone special, or all of the above, Costa Rica has a special offer in hand. For a list of the hotel properties, tour operators and car rental companies that are offering special vacation deals for visit:

Spa and well-being vacations are becoming the industry's newest travel trend and Costa Rica has been recognized by TripAdvisor users as one of the best places in Central and South America to enjoy spa getaways. The reason being that Costa Rica gives travelers a variety of ways to rejuvenate and cleanse including the hot springs near the Arenal Volcano, the tranquil, yoga-infused beaches of the Nicoya Peninsula or the nature-filled setting of its Central Valley.

Another major attraction of Costa Rica is its beaches. The country boasts over 1000 miles of coast line which vary between three types of climates. For surfing enthusiasts, the choices are

endless as well due to the 250 breaking points that can be found on its Pacific and Caribbean coasts. Of course, it caters to those who just wish to take in some sun and relax as well.

For the type of traveler who loves to pump their adrenaline, Costa Rica offers some of the top rated rivers in the world for white-water rafting as well as activities like hiking, wind surfing, kite surfing, horseback riding and much more. Of course, no Costa Rica vacation is complete without an exhilarating zipline tour through the canopies of the forest.

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**COSTA RICA'S EARTH UNIVERSITY AIMS TO "PLANT THE FUTURE"**

***Twenty Six Countries Around the World will Unite to Plant Trees Simultaneously***

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, June 2, 2010** – In commemoration of EARTH's twentieth Anniversary, EARTH University and its graduates, with the support of the Costa Rica Tourist Board (ICT), CNN and Cummins are organizing a simultaneous global tree planting on June 5, World Environment Day, called *EARTH Plants the Future*. Tree plantings have been organized by EARTH alumni in over 26 countries, and planting commitments exceed 650,000 trees as of today.

*EARTH Plants the Future* is both a symbolic and practical action to address climate change, as it represents both the hope for the future and a concrete act to mitigate current emissions of greenhouse gases. On the EARTH campus alone, there will be over 1500 participants planting 16,500 trees. All over Latin America, countries where our graduates are working have organized tree plantings, such as Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia and El Salvador.

"Initiatives such as these have propelled Costa Rica's goal to obtain environmental sustainability," said Carlos Ricardo Benavides, Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica. "We are excited to be supporting this important global initiative and we urge the international community to become advocates and unite in this endeavor on World Environment Day," added Benavides.

EARTH's office in the United States has also launched a campaign with donors, challenging them to use fundraising software to find friends and family to sponsor trees for the planting. The goal is for each participant to raise \$200, sponsoring 40 trees.

Those interested in getting involved with *EARTH Plants the Future* can participate remotely by purchasing trees on the website. Trees that will be planted at EARTH can be purchased for \$5,

or virtual trees can be planted for free. For every 20 trees planted virtually, a sponsor will donate one real tree.

### **Did you know?**

If every person on this planet were to plant just ONE tree, we would fix nearly 260 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually? That's enough to offset the annual carbon emissions of Colombia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama and Nicaragua COMBINED. Help us reach 1 million trees.

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### **About Costa Rica**

Costa Rica is located in Central America, nestled between Nicaragua and Panama, and bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and the west by the Pacific Ocean. This small country represents only .01 % of the planet's surface and it shelters almost 4% of the existing world's biodiversity. It has given priority to the conservation of its natural resources, protecting 26% of its national territory through the creation of National Parks and other natural areas. The country also offers world-class eco-tourism and adventure travel. The options are unlimited for any discriminating traveler: horseback riding on a secluded beach; hiking through the lush whispering greenery of a rainforest; having an exhilarating experience on a white-water rafting trip, observing the tropical forests from a canopy tour; surfing the blue waves of either coast; experiencing a quite, close encounter with different species of birds and wildlife; and enjoying the diverse culture and hospitality of the Ticos.

### **About EARTH University**

EARTH, located in Guácimo, Limón, Costa Rica is a private, international, non-profit university dedicated to education in the agricultural sciences and natural resources in order to contribute to sustainable development in the tropics by seeking a balance between agricultural production and environmental preservation. Over the last 20 years, EARTH has been implementing a unique educational model that allows the University to offer opportunities to the most qualified young people, and through these young leaders, EARTH contributes to the sustainable development of Latin America and other tropical regions

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## Comunicados de Prensa Mercado Nacional



## **Inicio de ferias turísticas del consumidor en los EEUU resultan exitosas para Costa Rica y ofrece señales de mejora en el comportamiento del consumidor**

**Stands de Costa Rica en Los Ángeles, Nueva York y Washington DC recibieron gran cantidad de visitantes durante su participación**

La participación de Costa Rica en las tres ferias de viajes más importantes del invierno le dio al país la oportunidad de posicionar el producto turístico frente a miles de consumidores, agencias de viajes y medios de comunicación. La presencia del Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (ICT), junto con su agencia de relaciones públicas, Burson-Marsteller, y miembros del sector privado permitió que los asistentes tuvieran la oportunidad de aprender más acerca de Costa Rica, incluyendo liderazgo en temas de sostenibilidad, turismo de aventura, turismo ecológico, y la variedad de productos y actividades turísticas que ofrece el país.

Las ferias turísticas en el invierno son una actividad importante y atractiva para los consumidores puesto que les ofrece una oportunidad inmediata de conocer más sobre el destino en que le gustaría pasar sus futuras vacaciones de verano. Únicamente en las ferias de viaje de *Los Angeles Adventure & Travel Show*, *The New York Times Travel Show*, y *The Washington DC Adventure & Travel Expo* atendieron más de 20.000 visitantes y más de 100 miembros de los medios de comunicación.



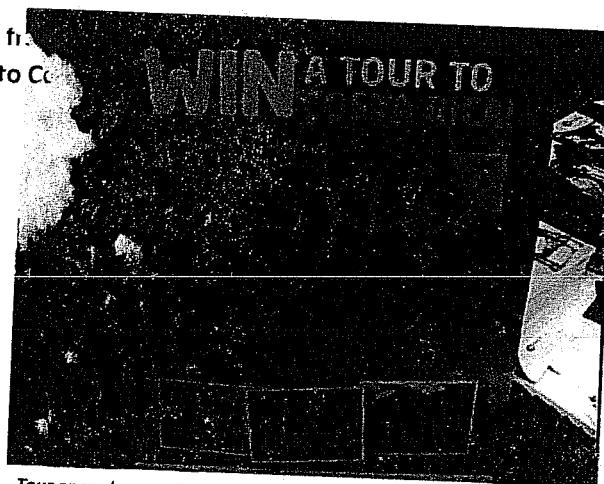
*Participantes esperan ansiosamente para entrar a LA Adventure & Travel Show*  
viajar a Costa Rica para escribir artículos en diferentes medios. Igualmente, se logró realizar entrevistas con medios importantes como *TravelMole.com*, la cual tiene 19,000 visitantes al mes, *travelpluswine.com*, con más de 60,000 visitantes al mes y el *LA Times* con circulación de 657,000. El medio *travelpluswine.com* ya transmitió su video en línea donde entrevistaron a Sarah Garrido, ejecutiva

Unicomm, la empresa organizadora de estos eventos de consumidor, consideran el mercado de Los Angeles el más exitoso. *The Los Angeles Adventure & Travel Show*, el cual fue realizado del 13 al 14 de febrero fue visitado por miles de potenciales viajeros. Mucho antes de que las puertas se abrieran al público, se acumularon los asistentes en largas líneas de espera ansiosos por visitar la variedad de destinos que estaban presentes. El stand de Costa Rica fue excepcionalmente popular durante este evento y Burson-Marsteller logró establecer más de 30 contactos directos con medios de comunicación que están interesados en



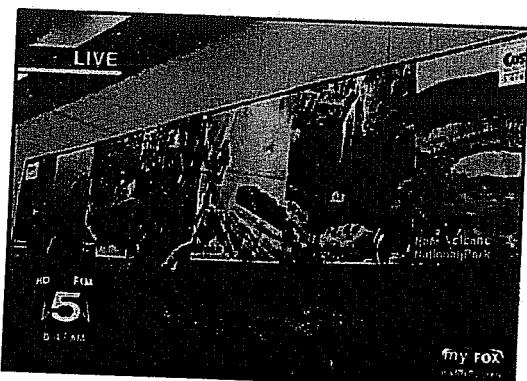
de Burson-Marsteller, sobre el producto turístico de Costa Rica. Para ver el video completo sigan el link: <http://travelpluswine.com/index.php?s=costa+rica>

El *New York Times Travel Show*, realizada entre el 26 y 28 de febrero y considerada como una de las ferias de viajes más destacadas, recibió un gran número de asistentes a pesar de la tormenta de nieve que azotó la ciudad durante esos días. La feria el *New York Times* informó que contó con más de 100 expositores y una gran participación de unos 100 expositores adicionales, comparado con el año anterior. Los organizadores además reportaron que los boletos de entrada al evento se agotaron durante el tercer día. De nuevo, el ICT una gran presencia durante la feria, entregando bastante material promocional. Este año, también participaron La Quinta Sarapiquí, Discovery Travel, Hotel Punta Islita, Costa Rica Sun Tours, Il Viaggio Tours y Casa Conde Hotels and Resorts, e igualmente consideran esta feria importante y planean volver en 2011.



Tour operador estadounidense regala viaje a Costa Rica durante el *New York Times Travel Show*

La presencia del Ministro de Turismo, Allan Flores, y el vicepresidente de la junta directiva del ICT, Harry Zurcher, también fue una gran adición durante el *New York Times Travel Show*, ya que atrajo una gran cantidad de interés por parte de los medios de comunicación. Burson-Marsteller logró realizar entrevistas directas con importantes medios como la revista *Conde Nast Traveler*, la cual tiene una circulación de 820,660; la revista *New York Resident*, la cual le llega a 250,000 lectores con un alto valor adquisitivo; la revista de consumidor *Endless Vacation*, la cual tiene una circulación de 1,834,277; y el escritor independiente reconocido, Mark Chestnut.



Noticiero de FOX en Washington DC cubre actividad de zipline en el *Adventure & Travel Show*

Durante la feria de *Washington D.C. Adventure & Travel*, la cual se realizó el 6 y 7 de marzo, Costa Rica disfrutó de una visibilidad especialmente alta debido a una variedad de actividades impulsadas por Costa Rica durante el evento; incluyendo el patrocinio de un simulacro de canopy, una presentación de destino dirigida por Mauricio Aymerich de ProImagen, así como la presencia de su stand. Estas actividades generaron cobertura del afiliado local de la cadena televisiva FOX, la cual le sirve al noveno mercado más grande del país y, a su vez, un gran interés en el destino y tráfico al stand.